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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6266
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 001337

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [KISL](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE CABINET POSTPONES MILF PEACE TALKS

REF: A. MANILA 1243
[1](#)B. MANILA 962
[1](#)C. MANILA 952
[1](#)D. MANILA 828

Classified By: A/DCM Scott Bellard for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) According to Philippine Government Peace Negotiations Panel Executive Director Ryan Sullivan, the Philippine Cabinet had recently postponed the next round of exploratory peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), originally due to begin o/a May 1 in Malaysia, until after the May 14 nationwide elections. Sullivan noted that the Cabinet made the decision after "leaked" technical papers from the 9th Exploratory Talks surfaced in the predominantly Christian province of Sultan Kudarat, where one of member of the government's Peace Panel -- and staunch supporter of President Arroyo -- Pax Mangudadatu is running for Congress.

[1](#)2. (C) Sullivan claimed that Mangudadatu's political opponent -- Angelo Roncal Montilla -- was responsible for circulating the "leaked papers" within Christian communities as "proof" of Mangudadatu's plan to include the entire province of Sultan Kudarat in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Montilla's accusations appear to resonate strongly against Mangudadatu with voters in Columbio and other municipalities, according to Sullivan.

[1](#)3. (U) Local press reporting on April 26 contained a warning from an unidentified "member of the cabinet security cluster" that the MILF's "demand" for the entire province of Sultan Kudarat would be another wrinkle in the MILF peace process.

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